

Home-Based Private Educational Program (Homeschooling)

Frequently Asked Questions – September 2015

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I. General Information about Homeschooling

1. What is a home-based private educational program?

Under Wisconsin Statute [118.15\(4\)](#), a parent or guardian has the right to select a home-based private educational program, commonly referred to as homeschooling, for his or her child or children, in order to comply with the compulsory school attendance law. If this option is chosen, the parent or guardian is required to complete the online PI-1206 Homeschool Enrollment Report.

Wisconsin Statute [115.001\(3g\)](#) states, "Home-based private educational program means a program of educational instruction provided to a child by the child's parent or guardian or by a person designated by the parent or guardian. An instructional program provided to more than one family unit does not constitute a home-based private educational program."

2. Can I enroll my child in homeschooling instead of a public or private school?

Yes. Homeschooling is an alternative to attendance at a public or private school under Wisconsin's compulsory school attendance law, s. [118.15\(1\)\(a\)](#), Wis. Stats. The compulsory school attendance law requires that, "... any person having under control a child who is between the ages of 6 and 18 years shall cause the child to attend school regularly during the full period and hours, religious holidays excepted, that the public or private school in which the child should be enrolled is in session until the end of the school term, quarter or semester of the school year in which the child becomes 18 years of age."

Wisconsin Statute [118.15\(4\)](#) states, "Instruction in a home-based private educational program that meets all of the criteria under [s. 118.165\(1\)](#) may be substituted for attendance at a public or private school."

3. *What are the requirements for a homeschooling program?*

Wisconsin Statute [118.165\(1\)](#) specifies that a home-based private educational program must provide "... at least 875 hours of instruction each school year." In addition, the program must provide a "... sequentially progressive curriculum of fundamental instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and health." The statutes contain no express authority for any agency or school district to monitor home-based private educational programs or to verify the hours of instruction provided or the use of a sequential curriculum. However, it is recommended that homeschooling parents maintain records of the instruction provided as this information may be used by prospective employers, including the military, and any post-secondary institutions to which the student may apply in the future.

4. *Who provides the instruction in a home-based private educational program?*

When a parent chooses to homeschool his/her child, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the child's educational program meets the requirements above. The parent is also responsible for obtaining educational materials to use for instruction. A homeschool parent may provide the instruction or designate someone else to do so.

Parents also have the option of enrolling their children, at the parent's expense, in an out-of-state and/or privately operated correspondence or virtual school. Parents who choose this option are responsible for ensuring that their child's educational program meets the requirements for a home-based private educational program in Wisconsin.

The DPI does not provide instruction or curricula for home-based private educational programs. For additional information on curricula and materials, see [Section III, Curricula and Materials](#).

5. *Are there any educational or training requirements for parents who enroll their children in a home-based private educational program?*

Under Wisconsin law, there are no minimum educational requirements for parents who provide a home-based private educational program. Nor are homeschooling parents required to hold a teaching certificate or license.

II. Homeschool Enrollment Report (Form PI-1206)

6. *How do I report enrollment of my child in a homeschooling program?*

Wisconsin Statute [115.30\(3\)](#) requires the child's parent or guardian to file the online PI-1206 homeschool enrollment report, which is available online from the Department of Public Instruction's website at: http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_homeb.

7. *When must I submit form PI-1206?*

Under current law, homeschooling parents are required to file the online PI-1206 homeschool form **annually**, on or before October 15. However, the PI-1206 form is available at any time during the school year. If you withdraw your child from a public or private school after October 15, your online PI-1206

form should be submitted or updated on or before the date your child ceases to attend the school.

If you withdraw your child from the public or private school prior to completing the online PI-1206 form, your resident school district may consider your child to be truant.

8. *How do I find out if my PI-1206 form has been approved?*

The PI-1206 form is not an application and neither the DPI nor your school district has authority to approve or deny a parent's homeschool program. Submittal of the PI-1206 form serves to notify the state and the child's resident school district that the child's parent has enrolled the child in a homeschool program. If all web pages are not fully completed or you have not clicked the "Submit Enrollment Data" button at the end of the form, the state and your child's resident district will not receive notification of your child's enrollment in a homeschooling program. Once you have successfully submitted your PI-1206 form, you will be able to print a paper copy of your form for your records. Your copy of your PI-1206 form includes your confirmation number and serves as your acknowledgement that you have enrolled your child(ren) in a homeschool program.

9. *How does my school district find out that I am homeschooling my child?*

Authorized staff members in your child's school district of residence have online access to the data on your PI-1206 form as soon as it is electronically submitted. School district staff do not have access to the password you created to submit the form. If you have submitted your PI-1206 form and your child's school does not have record of your form, you may refer your school's personnel to the school district administrative office. Contact information for all public school districts is available on the department's website at: <http://apps4.dpi.wi.gov/SchoolDirectory/Search/PublicDistrictsSearch>.

10. *How often do I need to submit the online PI-1206 form?*

The online PI-1206 Homeschool Report must be completed **each year** you wish to enroll your child(ren) in a homeschool program. You should also update your online PI-1206 form if you move to a different school district, or if you want to change the number of children enrolled in your homeschool program. On your PI-1206 form, you should indicate **only** the children you are homeschooling.

11. *How do I correct or change information for the online PI-1206 form that I already submitted?*

Only the parent(s) or guardian(s) is allowed to change their homeschooling information. In order to correct or change information, you will need to go to <https://apps4.dpi.wi.gov/HomeSchoolParent> sign in with the login id and password you used when you originally entered the information. Once signed in, you will be able to make changes and/or corrections. Please be sure to go through all the steps until you reach and click on the Submit button. If you do not click "Submit," your changes will not be saved and your school district will not have access to your changes and/or corrections.

After submission, you will have a chance to view and print a PDF document with your updated data. If you used an email address as the login id, you will also be sent a confirmation email with a new confirmation number. This does not mean that you have submitted an additional form, but rather, it is a confirmation that new information was submitted. We recommend keeping this information in your records. The school district that you live in will have immediate access to your new information.

12. *How can I enroll my child in homeschooling for kindergarten?*

Under Wisconsin law, enrollment in a home-based private educational program is a substitute for attendance at a public or private school under the compulsory school attendance law, which begins at age six. Since children under age six are not subject to the compulsory school attendance law, it is not possible to enroll a child in a homeschool program for four- or five-year-old kindergarten. If your child will not reach age six on or before September 1, it is not necessary for you to submit form PI-1206 to enroll him/her in a homeschool program for that school year.

Under recently passed legislation, completion of five-year-old kindergarten is a prerequisite for enrollment in a **public school** for first grade. If you choose not to enroll your child in a public or private school for kindergarten, then wish to enroll him/her in a public school for first grade, you will need to request an exemption from this requirement. Requests for exemptions must be made to the school district in which you wish to enroll your child. Additional information on this topic is available on the department's website at http://ec.dpi.wi.gov/ec_ec-entr-admiss.

III. Curricula and Materials

13. *When I enroll my child in a home-based private educational program, does the state or my school district provide the curriculum and textbooks?*

No. If you choose to enroll your child in homeschooling, you will be assuming all responsibilities for providing your child's education, including determining how you will provide instruction in the required subject areas and where you will obtain any curriculum and materials you will use.

14. *Where can I get a curriculum and textbooks?*

There are many different types of homeschooling curricula available for purchase through private publishers and other organizations. You can learn more about curricula vendors by searching the internet or visiting bookstores or public libraries.

Although local school districts are not obligated to provide materials to homeschooling families, you may contact your school district to determine if they can be of assistance.

15. *Does DPI recommend and/or approve any homeschooling curricula?*

No. The DPI has no authority to approve homeschooling curricula and does not make recommendations to parents regarding curricula or online schools. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to determine the curriculum that is most appropriate for his/her child.

16. *Can my child take courses at a public school while he/she is enrolled in homeschooling?*

The part-time attendance law, s.118.53, Wis. Stats., allows homeschooled students to attend a public school on a part-time basis. A school district is required, space permitting, to allow pupils who are enrolled in a homeschool program to take up to two courses per semester at any public school. Students must satisfy the minimum standards for admission to a course offered by the school district.

To register for courses, please contact the school district office you are interested in attending.

17. *Can my child take courses in another school district under the part-time attendance law?*

Yes. Under the part-time attendance law, a homeschooled student may take up to two courses at any public school in Wisconsin.

18. *If my child is enrolled in a public school, can I homeschool him/her for only one or two courses?*

No. Wisconsin law does not provide for "dual enrollment" in a public school and homeschooling. While the part-time attendance law described above permits a student who is enrolled in a homeschool program to attend a public school for up to two courses per semester, there is no comparable law that permits a student enrolled in a public school to take one or more courses in a homeschool program.

Under the compulsory school attendance law, any parent may request the school board, in writing, to provide their child with program or curriculum modifications and you are free to provide any supplemental instruction to your child beyond his/her public school curriculum.

IV. Online Schools

19. *How can I enroll my child in an online school?*

In Wisconsin, there are essentially two types of "virtual" or online programs in which a child can enroll: 1) a program offered by a private company that may be based anywhere in the country; and, 2) a program offered by a public Wisconsin charter school.

If you enroll your child in a program offered by an out-of-state school or private company, he/she would be considered enrolled in a homeschooling program. You will need to submit form PI-1206 and pay tuition to that entity. As the parent/guardian of a homeschooled student, you would be responsible for ensuring that the program in which you enroll your child meets the requirements of Wisconsin state law. The state does not approve or accredit any home-based private educational programs, including those offered by private online or correspondence companies. Such companies may or may not award a diploma or certificate upon completion of certain courses.

The second option is to enroll your child in one of the Wisconsin public school districts that offers a "virtual charter school." Although children who are enrolled in a virtual charter school receive instruction at home, each virtual charter school is "located" in a particular school district. If the school district in which you live (your "resident school district") does not operate a virtual charter school, or you wish to enroll your child in a virtual charter school offered by another school district, you would need to apply for open enrollment. The public school open enrollment program permits a parent to apply for their child to attend a public school, which can be a virtual charter school, in a school district other than the parent's resident district, without having to pay nonresident tuition. Information on applying for open enrollment is available on the department's open enrollment website at: http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_psctoc.

20. *What is the difference between homeschooling and enrolling my child in an online or virtual school?*

Virtual charter schools are public schools. If your child is enrolled in a virtual charter school, he/she is considered to be a public school student and you should not submit form PI-1206.

If your child is enrolled in a private or out-of-state online school, your child is considered to be

homeschooled and you are required to submit form PI-1206.

If you are unsure as to whether the virtual school in which your child will be enrolled is a Wisconsin virtual charter school, please contact the school.

V. Attendance and Accountability

21. *I submitted the online form PI-1206, but my child's former school says they have no record of his/her enrollment in a homeschool program. What can I do?*

Only school district staff members who have been specifically authorized by the school district administrator have access to the names of parents who have submitted PI-1206 forms to enroll children in homeschooling. It is possible that the staff member who contacted you is not authorized to view this information. You may refer that person to the district administrative office for confirmation that your PI-1206 form has been submitted.

In addition, you may want to verify that you entered the correct resident district on your PI-1206 form. If the wrong resident district is listed, it could be one of the reasons why the former school would contact the parent.

22. *What if I have filed form PI-1206 and someone alleges that I am not providing, and/or am incapable of providing, the required hours of instruction in the required subject areas and am, therefore, avoiding or circumventing the compulsory school attendance law?*

The legislature intended to provide parents the option of homeschooling their children with minimal interference from state and local officials. As the law is currently written, neither the Department of Public Instruction nor the local education agencies (public school districts) have specific statutory authority to monitor or regulate home-based private educational programs.

On the other hand, school districts are not specifically prohibited from monitoring, regulating, or investigating homeschooling families. A school district may have implied authority to investigate a complaint alleging that a particular home-based private educational program does not meet the criteria under [s. 118.165\(1\)](#), Wis. Stats. As a result of such a complaint, the school district could invite you to a meeting in an attempt to document and verify the hours of instruction and curricula used in the required subject areas.

23. *What is the role of the DPI in the Home-Based Private Educational Program?*

The Department of Public Instruction's role is to provide form PI-1206 to parents and respond to questions relating to Wisconsin's homeschooling laws and procedures. The DPI's role **does not** include providing personal consultation or technical assistance regarding home-based private educational programs. The home-based private educational program telephone numbers, (608) 267-9248 or toll free (888) 245-2732, extension 6, are available for additional general home-based private educational program information.

VI. Participation in Sports and Other Activities

24. Can my child participate in sports in my local school district?

2015 Act 55 requires a school board to permit resident pupils enrolled in a home-based private education program to participate in interscholastic athletics on the same basis and to the same extent as pupils enrolled in the district. The home-based program must provide the school board with a written statement that the pupil meets the requirements for participation, based on age and on the pupil's academic and disciplinary records. The school district may not question the accuracy or validity of the statement and could not request additional information. A school board may charge a homeschool pupil who participates in interscholastic athletics participation fees, including fees for uniforms and equipment, on the same basis and to the same extent that it charges these fees to a pupil who is enrolled in the school district.

Questions regarding sports participation in your resident school district should be directed to the district's athletic director or to the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (www.wiaawi.org).

25. Can my child participate in extracurricular activities and clubs offered by a public school?

Homeschool pupils may attend a school district part-time (as described in [Section III](#)) and may also participate in interscholastic athletics (as described in question #24) or extracurricular activities in their resident school district on the same basis and to the same extent as pupils enrolled in the district. A school board may charge a homeschool pupil who participates in extracurricular activities participation fees, including fees for uniforms, equipment, and musical instruments, on the same basis and to the same extent that it charges these fees to a pupil who is enrolled in the school district.

Please contact the school district directly to inquire about its policies.

VII. Testing

26. Are there any assessment or testing requirements for students enrolled in a home-based private educational program?

No. Wisconsin's homeschooling laws do not require any form of testing or assessment. If you wish to have your child tested or assessed periodically to determine their level of progress, you would be responsible for obtaining such tests.

While school districts are not obligated to provide testing services, you may contact your local school district regarding possible testing using local district tests. A fee may be imposed for any services rendered. Public school districts in Wisconsin are not allowed to administer the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations, which are required for public school students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 10, to students enrolled in home-based private educational programs.

VIII. Special Education

27. Is my school district required to provide special education and related services for my child while he/she is enrolled in a home-based private educational program?

No, school districts are not required to provide special education and related services to children with disabilities enrolled in home-based private educational programs.

However, since neither federal nor state law prohibits districts from providing special education services to home-schooled children, school districts may provide any special education and related services to these children that they deem appropriate. If a public school district chooses to provide these services, the costs are not aided by DPI under federal or state categorical aids.

Public school districts are required to provide the service of identifying and evaluating all children in the district who may have a disability. If a child is found to have a disability, the district must offer a placement that would provide the child a free appropriate public education. Generally, this placement means the child would be enrolled in a public school.

If you suspect that your child may have a disability, you can request that he/she be evaluated by the public school. The district will then perform a publicly-funded evaluation and, if your child is found to have a disability, offer your child a placement to meet his/her educational needs.

IX. Diplomas and Applying for College

28. How will my homeschooled child receive a high school diploma?

In Wisconsin, high school diplomas are issued by public and private schools. A home-based private educational program does not lead to a traditional Wisconsin high school diploma.

Some homeschooling families do create a diploma upon completion of their home-based private educational program. Although these home-issued diplomas are not traditional high school diplomas, the Wisconsin Parents Association has indicated these home-issued diplomas are widely accepted by potential employers, colleges, and universities for admission and financial aid.

A student who is enrolled in a home-based private educational program may wish to pursue the [requirements](#) for a General Educational Development (GED) certificate and/or a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED). Additional information about obtaining a GED or HSED is available on the department's website at: <http://ged-hsed.dpi.wi.gov>.

Also, private companies and schools (including universities) offer distance learning programs and some of them grant high school diplomas upon completion of certain requirements.

29. Will my child be able to apply to a college or university after completing a home-based private educational program?

Most institutions of higher education use alternative admissions processes for students who do not have a traditional high school background. These institutions may use any documentation that you might have available in addition to your child's scores on the ACT and/or SAT tests in determining whether he/she is qualified for admission.

You should contact each postsecondary institution your child is interested in attending for information on its admissions policies. You may need to provide the institution with copies of the PI-1206 forms you have filed with the DPI as well as records relating to the number of hours of instruction provided, the curriculum, and your child's academic progress.

X. Privacy

30. *Will the Department of Public Instruction release my name and address to outside organizations or individuals?*

Consistent with the state's public records law and the federal [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#), the Department of Public Instruction does not release the names of families who have enrolled their children in homeschool programs.

31. *Will the Department of Public Instruction provide information to my child's non-custodial parent relating to his/her enrollment in a homeschool program?*

Under Wisconsin's pupil records law, a parent or guardian must be granted access to his or her child's pupil records unless he or she has been denied access by a court order or other legally binding document that specifically revokes these rights [7 C.F.R. § 99.4](#).

In order to ensure compliance with the state's public records law and federal FERPA, it is the policy of the DPI to notify the parent who filed an online PI-1206 homeschool enrollment report prior to the release of any information to the requesting parent.

If you receive such notification, you will have 14 days in which to notify the DPI if the requesting parent has been denied access to the child's pupil records and provide copies of the court order or other legally binding document to DPI. If no such notification is received by DPI, a copy of the data from the online PI-1206 homeschool enrollment report is provided to the requesting parent.

XI. Financial Assistance

32. *Is there any financial assistance available for homeschooling families?*

No. There is no publicly-funded financial assistance for homeschooling families available from either the local school district or from the state.

33. *What happens to the funding my school district receives for my child?*

In Wisconsin, public school districts receive most of their funding from state aid and the property tax. State equalization aid is distributed to school districts based, in part, on the number of students enrolled in the public schools on certain dates during the school year. Since a homeschooled student is not enrolled in a public school, the child's resident school district is not permitted to include him/her in its membership count for purposes of claiming state aid. Thus, there are no state funds allocated to your school district on behalf of your child. The same is true of property taxes to support school districts.

XII. Withdrawing from Homeschooling

34. What if I decide to enroll my child in a public or private school after submitting the PI-1206 form?

If you submit an online PI-1206 form and later decide to enroll or re-enroll your child in a public or private school later in the same school year, you will need to return to the online PI-1206 form at http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_homeb and sign in to your form using the ID and password you created. You will then need to scroll through the form to the “enrollment” page and change the number of students enrolled in the homeschool program as appropriate. The changes will not take effect until you click continue and “submit.”

35. Will the credits my child earned while homeschooling transfer to the public or private school?

When a student who was previously enrolled in a homeschool enrolls in a public or private school, that school district or private school has discretion regarding grade level placement and the number of credits, if any, that it will grant the student for courses completed in the homeschool program. You may wish to contact the school or school district where your child will enroll to inquire about its policies.

XIII. Resources

36. Are there any parent organizations that can help?

There are many home-based parent associations you may wish to contact for further information about homeschooling. In Wisconsin, two of the largest are:

1. Wisconsin Parents Association
P.O. Box 2502
Madison, WI 53701-2502
(608) 283-3131 (voice mail)
<http://www.homeschooling-wpa.org/>
2. Wisconsin Christian Home Educators Association
P.O. Box 320458
Franklin, WI 53132
(414) 425-6324
<http://www.wisconsinchea.com>

*Please note that the Department of Public Instruction is not responsible for any information that may be provided by these organizations, nor does their inclusion on this website imply any type of endorsement by the DPI.

Contact Us

If you have questions about the PI-1206 Homeschool Enrollment Report, please contact Diane Sullivan at (608) 267-9248 or toll-free at (888) 245-2732, extension 6, or send an email to homeschooling@dpi.wi.gov.